

Message Text

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TAGS: EGEN, UN, ECOSOC

SUBJECT: ECOSOC: FIFTH SESSION OF COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
RESOURCES (GENEVA) MAY 9-20, 1977-DELEGATION WRAP-UP

1. SUMMARY: THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES (CNR),
A SUBSIDIARY BODY OF ECOSOC, HELD ITS FIFTH SESSION IN
GENEVA FROM MAY 9-20, 1977. ALTHOUGH BOTH THE TIMING AND
PLACE OF THE MEETING WEIGHED AGAINST A FULLY SUCCESSFUL
AND USEFUL SESSION, US DEL BELIEVES IT ACCOMPLISHED ITS
PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES. THE SUCCESS OF FUTURE MEETINGS,
AND THE CONTINUED USEFULNESS OF CNR, WILL DEPEND ON DECI-
SIONS OF GOVERNMENTS AND ON HOW WELL THE PROBLEMS ENCOUN-
TERED IN 1977 CAN BE AVOIDED IN 1979. END SUMMARY.
2. BOTH THE TIMING AND THE LOCATION OF THE MEETING HAM-
PERED ITS USEFULNESS. THE FINAL REPORT OF THE WATER CON-
FERENCE WAS NOT YET AVAILABLE. THE FACT THAT THE NORTH/
SOUTH CONFERENCE (CIEC) WAS IN ITS FINAL MONTHS MADE ANY
ACTION ON ENERGY IMPOSSIBLE AND LIMITED DISCUSSION CONSIDERABLY,
DESPITE EFFORTS OF THE CENTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES,

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ENERGY AND TRANSPORT (CNRET) TO PROVOKE REACTIONS THROUGH
ITS SPECIFIC PROPOSALS (UN DOCUMENTS E/C.7/70 AND 75).
BY MEETING IN GENEVA, THE COMMITTEE ALSO BECAME THE LEAST
IMPORTANT "RING "IN A VERY BUSY "CIRCUS". WITH CIEC IN PARIS
AND IMPORTANT UNCTAD MEETINGS ON SUGAR AND COPPER UNDERWAY
IN GENEVA, MANY G-77 MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE SENT NO
DELEGATIONS; OTHER MEMBERS

SENT REPRESENTATIVES WITHOUT ANY BRIEF FOR SUBSTANTIVE PARTICIPATION. CONVERSELY, THE PRESENCE OF MANY REPRESENTATIVES FROM GENEVA PERMANENT DELEGATIONS MAY HAVE HEIGHTENED THE POLITICAL CONTENT OF THE MEETING. FINALLY, DELAYS IN CIRCULATING THE DOCUMENTATION CAUSED MANY DELEGATIONS TO BE UNPREPARED AND PROBABLY DISCOURAGED SOME COUNTRIES FROM SENDING "EXPERT" REPRESENTATIVES. THE CANADIAN DELEGATION, HEADED BY JEAN-PAUL DROLET, DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES, HAD THE HIGHEST LEVEL REPRESENTATIVE. OTHER DELEGATIONS WHICH INCLUDED OFFICIALS FROM HOME AGENCIES DEALING WITH NATURAL RESOURCES WERE FRANCE, GDR, INDONESIA, KENYA, NORWAY, POLAND, SWAZILAND, SWEDEN, USSR, UK, U.S., VENEZUELA, AND ZAMBIA.

3. MEMBERS OF THESE DELEGATIONS MADE THE MOST OF THE SUBSTANTIVE (I.E. NOT ADMINISTRATIVE OR POLITICAL) COMMENTS. INDEED, MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION ON THE COMMITTEE DOCUMENTATION WAS ESSENTIALLY A SERIES OF DIALOGUES BETWEEN CNRET DIRECTOR BAUM AND REPRESENTATIVES OF INDUSTRIALIZED STATES. THESE EXCHANGES, HOWEVER, LIMITED IN PARTICIPATION, DID GIVE THE U. S. DELEGATION AND EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE WORK OF CNRET AND TO OFFER USEFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK. BOTH BAUM AND THE COMMITTEE WERE GENERALLY RECEPTIVE TO OUR IDEAS, AND WE CAN EXPECT CNRET TO CONTINUE PRODUCING INTERESTING INITIATIVES.

4. THE ADOPTION OF A U.S. DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE WATER CONFERENCE FOLLOW-UP SECURED ALL OF OUR OBJECTIVES RELATIVE TO REGIONAL FOLLOW-UP, A SPECIAL SESSION, AND A CONTINUED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CENTRAL ROLE FOR CNR. AMONG THE OTHER NATIONS' INITIATIVES, THE MOST IMPORTANT WAS THE KENYA RESOLUTION'S OPENING THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONFERENCE ON NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES. OF THE FOUR RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR NEW CNRET STUDIES, THE CANADIAN PROPOSAL ON CHROMITE AND THAT OF THE EASTERN EUROPEANS ON COAL MAY RESULT IN USEFUL WORK; THOSE OF THE LATTER DELEGATIONS ON NICKEL AND NATURAL GAS WILL PROBABLY BE OF LIMITED VALUE. ALTHOUGH THE PERMANENT SOVEREIGNTY RESOLUTION RESULTED FROM AN INITIATIVE QUITE UNRELATED TO OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITY (EVEN ON THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF PERMANENT SOVEREIGNTY), IT CLEARLY PROVIDES A WEIGHT ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THE CNR BALANCE.

5. ALMOST ALL WESTERN AND G-77 DELEGATIONS (EXCEPT KENYA, NOTABLY) WERE UNWILLING TO COMMIT THEMSELVES ON CNR'S ROLE IN ENERGY MATTERS AFTER CIEC OR ON THE CNR PROPOSAL FOR A CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON ENERGY RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT. FURTHER, THE U.S. DELEGATION RECEIVED NO SPECIFIC INDICATION THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO THESE POSSIBILITIES

IN A POST-CIEC SITUATION. THE EASTERN EUROPEANS, ALTHOUGH DISASSOCIATING THEMSELVES FROM THE CIEC-BASED ARGUMENTS, WERE EQUALLY RESERVED. A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS ALSO PLACED THE CNR PROPOSAL, AND ANY OTHER ENERGY FOLLOW-UP, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE. IN THE END, CONSENSUS WAS ACHIEVABLE ONLY ON A PASSAGE IN THE CONFERENCE REPORT WHICH NOTED THAT "THE CHAIRMAN INTERPRETED THE COMMITTEE TO THE EFFECT THAT IT RECOMMENDS TO ECOSOC TO CONSIDER A REVIEW ON THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CO-OPERATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM...AND THAT IT INCLUDE IN ITS WORK PROGRAMME FROM 1978 AN ITEM ON THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CO-OPERATION." THE EC RESERVED EVEN ON THIS. WHILE US DEL (ALONG WITH SWEDEN AND SOME G-77 DELEGATIONS) WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A DRAFT RESOLUTION, HOWEVER MILDLY WORDED, THIS PROCEDURE DID ACCOMPLISH OUR AIM OF LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN FOR UN WORK ON ENERGY, SHOULD WE LATER CHOOSE TO USE IT.

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6. CONCLUSION. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE CONTINUED USEFULNESS OF THE CNR IS IN QUESTION. BOTH THE UK AND CANADIAN DELEGATES, AND EVEN BAUM, EXPRESSED DOUBTS TO US AS TO THE CONTINUED VALUE OF THE COMMITTEE. THE US DELEGATION CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT THE CNR COULD REPEAT COULD SERVE A SUEFUL FUNCTION. BUT THIS IMPLIES MORE REPRESENTATION BY SUBSTANTIVE OFFICIALS AND BETTER PREPARATIONS, INCLUDING MORE PROMPT DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTS. CLEARLY, MEETINGS OUTSIDE NEW YORK OF GENEVA ARE MORE CONDUCIVE TO SUBSTANTIVE IMPUTS. IN THIS REGARD, THE TURKISH INVITATION FOR THE NEXT CNR (1979) IS A WELCOME INITIATIVE. MOST IMPORTANT, GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING OUR OWN, WILL HAVE TO DECIDE THE USES TO WHICH THE COMMITTEE CAN BE PUT IN THE FUTURE.

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